

## **PROCEEDINGS OF THE HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD**

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2007**

**3:00 P.M., J. MARTIN GRIESEL ROOM, CENTENNIAL PLAZA II**

The Historic Conservation Board met at 3:00 P.M., in the J. Martin Griesel Room, Centennial Plaza II, with members Senhauser, Fisher, Spraul-Schmidt, Wallace and Raser present. Absent: Chatterjee, Kreider and Young.

### **CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS, 4119 HAMILTON AVENUE, NORTHSIDE NBD HISTORIC DISTRICT & 1400 CLAY STREET, OVER-THE-RHINE HISTORIC DISTRICTS**

Since the murals at Hamilton Avenue and Clay Street were both part of the City of Cincinnati MuralWorks program, the Board heard these two items concurrently. Staff member Caroline Kellam informed the Board that City Council had passed an ordinance on September 6, 2007 exempting the MuralWorks program from building permit and the Zoning Code requirements. As a result, the applicant, ArtWorks, is presenting its plans as a courtesy. Ms. Kellam indicated that although the program was exempted from historic review the Board could vote to support the program and the murals if it wished.

Ms. Kellam explained that the Clay Street mural illustrated on the staff report will be replaced with a new design. The new mural will be in the same location but the subject matter is as of yet undetermined. The Board asked ArtWorks to explain the original concept for the Clay Street mural. Adam Mysock, ArtWorks, said the postage stamp incorporated the images and biographical reference of Presidents Garfield and Taft, whose terms coincided with development in Over-the-Rhine. The folding chair represents outdoor recreation. He said the juxtaposition between the two images was intentionally unresolved and intended to be playful. Mr. Mysock explained that not everyone in the community interpreted the imagery positively and his organization would be holding meeting to select a theme and design that was more acceptable to the neighborhood.

### **BOARD ACTIONS**

1. The Board voted unanimously (motion by Raser, second by Spraul-Schmidt) to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the painting of a mural on south elevation of 4119 Hamilton Avenue as proposed in the submittal dated August 22, 2007.
2. The Board voted unanimously (motion by Fisher, second by Wallace) to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the painting of a mural on north elevation of 1400 Clay Street.

### **CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS & ZONING VARIANCE, 1411 AND 1413 MANSFIELD STREET, OVER-THE -RHINE HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Staff member Adrienne Cowden presented a report on the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness and a Zoning Variance for a privacy fence at 1411 and 1413 Mansfield Street. Ms. Cowden indicated an existing board-on-board fence was removed and construction of the new fence was begun without a Certificate of Appropriateness or a building permit. The applicant, Marco Lacina, stopped work on the fence pending the Board's review.

Ms. Cowden said that the wood frame fence is covered with cement board sheets that will receive a textured skim coat. When complete the fence will have the appearance of a masonry wall so staff reviewed it as such even though it is wood frame construction. Ms. Cowden indicated that the grade slopes away from the rear corner of 1411 Mansfield Street to the southwest. The fence has a level top and ranges in height from 6' to 8'.

Ms. Cowden confirmed for the Board that the fence will not and does not retain earth. She said staff did not recommend changing the grade to eliminate the need for a Zoning Variance because this

could result in damage to the adjacent historic building at 1409 Mansfield. The local building inspector, Michael Sweeney, has also instructed the applicant not to change the grade.

In response to Mr. Senhauser, Ms. Cowden indicated the fence will be painted a reddish-orange color to match 1413 Mansfield.

The applicant Marco Lacina apologized for having begun work on the fence without a Certificate of Appropriateness and hoped the Board could approve his application.

Ms. Wallace asked Mr. Lacina to describe why he wanted the new fence. Mr. Lacina said he has secured permits to install pavers parking pad. He felt this improvement would further highlight what he felt was an ugly, inappropriate fence. In response to Ms. Wallace, Mr. Lacina asserted that the new fence will create more secure, private yard for his tenants.

Mr. Raser inquired how the top of the fence will be finished. Mr. Lacina said the cement board would be sealed, capped with a board and then stuccoed over.

### **BOARD ACTION**

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Spraul-Schmidt, second by Raser) to take the following actions:

1. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed fence finding that, in this particular circumstance, it meets the Over-the-Rhine conservation guidelines on the condition that the exterior faces of the fence are skim coated with cement, painted a uniform brick color and kept free of graffiti.
2. Approve the necessary Zoning Variance for the 8'-0" height of the proposed fence finding that such relief from the literal interpretation of the Cincinnati Zoning Code will not be materially detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare or injurious to property in the district or vicinity where the work is located and is necessary and appropriate in the interest of historic conservation so as not to adversely affect the historic architectural or aesthetic integrity of the district.

### **CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, HILLSIDE REVIEW & ZONING VARIANCE, 559 LIBERTY HILL STREET, PROSPECT HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Ms. Kellam presented a report on a proposed fence and wall in front of the Pendleton House at 559 Liberty Hill Street, a National Historic Landmark and a contributing building in the Prospect Hill Historic District. Ms. Kellam indicated that although stone retaining walls were common in the district, freestanding ones with formal entries were not. Ms. Kellam added that the wall, which will be as tall as 10' in sections, will require a Zoning Variance.

Ms. Kellam said only Don Beck, architect and resident of Prospect Hill, contacted staff to offer suggestions. She added that the applicant had agreed to consider modifications to the design.

Ms. Senhauser suggested that because there were some unresolved issues with the design, the applicant might want to have the Board consider the proposal as a preliminary design review and delay formal consideration to a later meeting. The applicant, Michael Bred, agreed.

Mr. Bred explained the fence was modeled after the Taft Home at 2038 Auburn Avenue and the stone retaining walls on Liberty Hill. He clarified for the Board that the irregular fence line at the rear of the property followed existing site contours and that additional landscaping would be added at the eastern corner. Mr. Bred also confirmed that the wall will be somewhat higher than the house's stone foundation and that it did retain earth in some areas.

Mr. Raser observed that the parking lot entry gate seemed to be incorrectly shown on the site plan and that if located as shown would require removal of a street tree. Mr. Bred indicated he would investigate this issue.

Mr. Senhauser said that a stone wall could be appropriate if it better related to the house. Specifically, he suggested the wall should be the height and width of the house's foundation and be capped with a cut stone cap to match the foundation watertable. Mr. Senhauser emphasize that the iron picket fence and gate must be carefully detailed.

Don Beck said he supported the idea of a security fence, but that it should not appear prison-like. He said the street wall helped soften the effect, but should be stepped at the entry; it might be continued further downhill or return to the house.

### **BOARD ACTION**

Because this was a preliminary design review, no Board action was required.

### **PRELIMINARY DESIGN REVIEW, 3746 SACHEM AVENUE, COLUMBIA TUSCULUM HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Ms. Cowden presented a report on the construction of a new single-family residence at 3746 Sachem in the Columbia Tusculum Historic District. Ms. Cowden indicated that the proposal was rougher than staff would typically bring to the Board. However, considering changes in Board members, the history of this site, neighborhood concerns involving views and drainage and the fact that the owner, Remco deJong had presented a vastly different design to the Board in May, staff felt it was important to introduce a new proposal early in the design process.

Architect Luke Robinson described the new design as being in two principle parts – “big sister”, a three-story section to the uphill (east) side of the property and “little sister”, a smaller, two-story section on the downhill side. The house reads as two linked masses; the little sister stands behind the big sister and is connected by a stair that allows the house to step down the hillside. Each portion has a street-facing gable broken by a second floor porch on the smaller section and by a projecting third floor bay on the larger. The entry is through the first floor of the little sister; the first floor of the big sister is a two-car garage.

Mr. Robinson described the building materials as board-and-batten siding on a natural stone base. A stone retaining wall supports the driveway and spans a front yard swale. He explained that the landform and the smaller footprint of the little sister will allow him to bridge the present ravine and hopefully resolve the difficult drainage issue. In answer to Mr. Raser, Mr. Robinson said the second retaining wall to the east of the driveway will be approximately 7' high, allowing the garage sill to be only 1' or 2' above the street.

Mr. Senhauser said the strategy of breaking the house into two sections had merit. He said it allowed that project to better relate in size, scale and siting to neighboring historic houses, particularly those on the opposite side of Sachem. He complimented the high degree of articulation, detail and volume of the design. Mr. Robinson added that he would have preferred to set the house closer to the street, but was working off the setback approved for the previous owner.

The Board generally agreed that the new design was successful in reflecting its neighbors. It also suggested that the entry should be clearly identifiable and related more to the street than the driveway. Mr. Robinson answered that a paved walkway would be incorporated into the driveway.

Vince Stamp, owner of 3734 Sachem, reiterated concerns he had about how construction on the site could impact drainage and his property. He referred to earlier schemes to direct water through the

site for previous proposals and distributed an engineering report prepared by H.C. Nutting. He acknowledged that the problem can be solved, but at a potentially high cost.

**BOARD ACTION**

Because this was a preliminary design review, no Board action was required.

**PRELIMINARY DESIGN REVIEW, 3457 OBSERVATORY PLACE, OBSERVATORY HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Ms. Kellam presented a report on the construction of a new three-story addition to 3457 Observatory Place. Ms. Kellam said that except for a 20<sup>th</sup> century addition, the present building has remained substantially unchanged in the last one hundred years. She summarized the design elements, materials and location of the proposed addition for the Board. Ms. Kellam said that the addition will be visible from a rear alley but will be largely out of view from Observatory Place. The Department of Buildings & Inspections has not yet reviewed the project, but Ms. Kelam did not anticipate any Zoning Variances.

Architect Andrew Corn was present to answer questions from the Board. He briefly explained the design considerations leading to the present configuration. Mr. Corn said that the only exterior element to be removed was a rear chimney to accommodate a plan change. Exterior materials and finishes were selected to match the original house. He indicated that the addition will accommodate an expanded kitchen and a master suite and add a new basement family room. Mr. Corn pointed out that the addition will almost double the square footage of the house, but that much of its mass is at the basement level. He felt the superimposed terraces will not substantially alter the fenestration or obscure views of the historic core.

Mr. Senhauser said he found that the addition, despite its large size, was compatible with the scale of the existing house. He said he knew the front elevation was not being modified, but suggested that the enclosed porch addition on the south side might be redesign to open its windowless front wall. Mr. Corn agreed but said that the blank wall housed an extensive entertainment center that would be difficult to relocate.

Ms. Spraul-Schmidt complimented the architects on the graphic materials provided.

Mr. Raser questioned the placement of the exterior stair leading from the upper terrace to the rear yard. Mr. Corn explained that other locations were considered, but they encroached significantly on the interiors. He said the stair would be fabricated in steel to be as transparent as possible. Mr. Raser asked whether elements from the house could be reused in the addition. Mr. Corn responded that original elements would be reused when possible and that new ones would be replicated as needed.

**BOARD ACTION**

Because this was a preliminary design review, no Board action was required.

**ADJOURN**

As there were no other items for consideration by the Board, the meeting adjourned.

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William L. Forwood  
Urban Conservator

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John C. Senhauser, Chairman

Date: \_\_\_\_\_